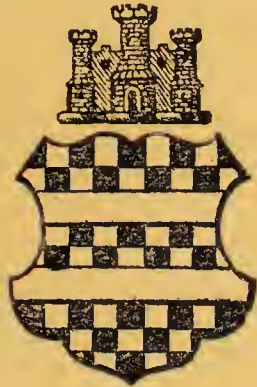
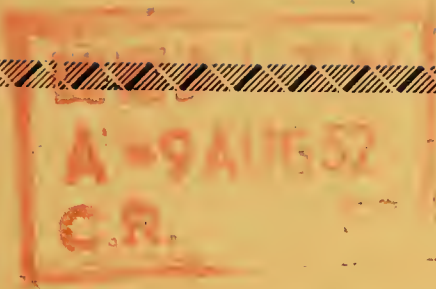


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BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE

**Medical Officer of Health**

FOR

**YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1951**

South Western Press, Ltd., "Times" Office, Tavistock



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BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

Year ended 31st December, 1951

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**PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF :**

Medical Officer of Health—

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE, M.D., D.P.H.

Borough Engineer and Sanitary Inspector—

R. A. BRUNSKILL, D.P., R.S.I.

Assistant to Sanitary Inspector—

E. FURSE

Hon. Meteorologist—

Alderman HARRY



Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councilors,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1951.

The general health of the Borough can be described as satisfactory, although there was a considerable increase in morbidity amongst the child and adult population from infectious causes.

It now being twenty years since the last census to the recent one, it is, I feel, appropriate to appreciate briefly the progress of the Borough in its vital and material aspects during this interval of time. The following table has therefore been prepared in order that some broad inferences as regards our sociological tendencies can be studied :—

Year	Popula- tion	Number of Inhabited Houses	Persons per House	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Product of of 1d. rate
1931	3,307	856	3.9	9.6	15.1	£74
1932	3,349	886	3.8	11.8	16.9	£74
1933	3,356	872	3.8	11.3	8.3	£75
1934	3,334	898	3.7	13.8	16.0	£75
1935	3,519	946	3.7	13.3	15.6	£80
1936	3,307	983	3.4	11.8	13.8	£81
1937	3,587	1,005	3.6	10.3	12.8	£82
1938	3,562	1,014	3.5	11.3	14.6	£84
1939-1945 Statistics unreliable owing to the war						
1946	3,925	1,050	3.7	24.5	13.2	£99
1947	3,952	1,080	3.6	23.0	15.5	£96
1948	4,090	1,090	3.7	16.9	15.4	£96
1949	4,020	1,097	3.7	15.4	16.4	£97
1950	4,040	1,107	3.6	16.3	14.1	£99
1951	3,929	1,123	3.5	12.7	15.3	£99

The population has increased by about 620 persons during twenty years, which figure includes 180-odd who were added by the extension of the Borough boundary in 1935. This very moderate increase cannot be accounted for as a natural one of excess of births over deaths, for although the average birth rate for 20 years is 14.5 per 1,000 resident population against an average death rate of 14.2, the figure for births is outweighed by the extremely high birth rate for the two post-war years. If this transitory spate of births be disregarded a truer picture of the vital element becomes evident. This shows clearly that the birth-rate on an average is constantly below the death-rate and any increase in population is not a natural one, but due to inward migration from elsewhere. This being so one can only infer than at best the population of the Borough is a static one and apart from entirely unpredictable events is likely to remain so.

This leads logically to a brief study of the housing situation in the Borough. The problem of overcrowding in the legal sense has never been urgent, in fact when the official overcrowding survey was undertaken less than a score of premises were legally overcrowded. There are, however, several areas in the Borough where an undesirable density of population exists and this congestion can only be alleviated by an extensive building programme which happily, at the time of writing, appears to be under way. This lack of adequate building is clearly defined in the column showing the persons per house, which remains almost constant through the years.

In concluding this brief survey of the past I would recommend the Corporation for the foreseeable future to concentrate on the elimination of the remaining undesirable areas of housing congestion, and the perfection of public amenities for which Nature has provided so delightful a setting.

SECTION A—

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (statute acres)	...	...	...	...	786
Population—1931 Census	...	...	...	...	3,519
Population—1951 Census	...	...	...	...	3,897
Estimated Home Population—Mid 1951	...	...	...	...	3,929
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	1,123
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£25,305
Product of Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£99
Loan Debt	...	...	...	...	£51,510

VITAL STATISTICS

					Male	Female	Total
Live Births	...	...	...	...	22	28	50
Legitimate	...	...	...	...	22	28	
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	—	—	

England and  
Wales

Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 population	...	...	...	...	12.7	15.5
Corrected Birth Rate	...	...	...	...	12.4	
Still Births	...	...	...	...	5	
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 live and still births	...	...	...	...	90.9	0.36

					Male	Female	Total
Deaths	...	...	...	...	28	32	60

England and  
Wales

Crude Death Rate per 1,000 population	...	...	...	...	15.3	12.5
Corrected Death Rate	...	...	...	...	12.2	
Deaths from Maternal Causes	...	...	...	...	Nil	
Maternal Mortality	...	...	...	...	—	0.79
Deaths of Infants under 1 year	...	...	...	...	1	
Infant Mortality	...	...	...	...	20.0	29.6

The chief causes of death were as follows :—

Infectious Causes :

Influenza	...	...	...	...	...	3
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	1

General Causes :

Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	...	16
Cerebral Vascular Disease	...	...	...	...	...	11
Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	8

Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Coronary Disease	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Gastric Ulcer	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Arteriosclerosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Gastritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Accidental	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Other causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

**Infants under 1 year :**

Broncho pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	1
Total :						60

### AGE OF DEATH TABLE

Age at Death						Male	Female
Infants under 1 year	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
1—5 years	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
5—15	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
15—25	...	...	...	...	...	2	—
25—35	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
35—45	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
45—55	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
55—65	...	...	...	...	...	3	2
65—75	...	...	...	...	...	8	7
75 and over	...	...	...	...	...	12	19
Totals :						28	32

## SECTION B

### GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE HEALTH SERVICE

There was no change in the health services during the year apart from minor administrative adjustments.

The Hospital Management Committee are responsible for the Hospital and employ the specialists ; the Devon Executive Council administers the service supplied by the local doctors ; the County Council are responsible for ambulances, clinics, welfare and schools and employ their own staff ; and the Local Authority employ the M.O.H. Between these four groups, apart from social contact, there is no co-ordination whatsoever and the M.O.H., who is supposed to be familiar with everything which may affect the health of his people (at least those are his terms of reference) frequently wonders if he is in the picture at all.

## SECTION C

### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Mr. Brunskill has submitted the following report on the sanitary circumstances of the Borough for the year :—



## Water Supply—

Sources : Supplies at the intakes on Dartmoor have been quite adequate throughout the year.

Rainfall : Rainfall records are taken at two points on the watershed and at the Filter Station. Returns are sent monthly to the Air Ministry Meteorological Office. The 1951 figures were the second overall highest for the past 11 years and similar to 1950. Readings are taken monthly at Cranmere and Newbridge and daily at the Filter Station.

The following are the rainfall figures for the past 5 years :—

	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947
Cranmere ... ..	92.18	91.00	66.50	92.80	78.05
Newbridge ... ..	79.00	79.10	61.95	76.66	59.95
Filter Station ...	65.00	62.13	44.40	56.55	49.20
Dry Days (no rain)	128	144	176	158	188

The driest months were October, June and July, and the wettest November, January and February, in those orders. There were long dry spells of ten days' average in October, July and June only. On seven days there was more than 1in. fall.

Intake Mains : Though within the artillery danger zone, intake mains have again escaped damage and have functioned properly throughout the year. Minor clearing of old supply pipes and land draining has been carried out on the abandoned works on the Okehampton Park Estate.

Filtration and Treatment : The plant has been in continuous operation throughout the year. Minor intermittent faults were remedied by the attendant in daily attendance. The treated water is clear, soft, colourless and of excellent taste. Analyses indicate it to be of a satisfactory standard of purity both bacteriologically and chemically.

Distribution : The zonal distribution system giving a standardised pressure in the central low-level area and maintaining pressure in the outer high-level zones has now been in continuous day and night operation for 14 years without interruption except for repairs. Some discolouration persisted after mains had been scraped in 1950, but this has gradually become less noticeable. General maintenance, including flushing of mains and detection of leaks, was regularly continued. New services have been provided for seven existing properties, two new private houses, and ten new houses at Savile Mead.

## Drainage and Sewerage—

Sewers and sewage disposal works have continued to operate satisfactorily during the year. Trade effluent from the Gas Works has continued with little nuisance. Very minor repairs were carried out on the East and West river sewers.

The enlarged sludge beds have been in operation throughout the year and have been most satisfactory. Additional labour was supplied to the farmer for clearing and spreading sludge. The irrigation channels were partially cleared. Effluent standards have been well maintained and no complaints as to river pollution have been received.

### Rivers and Streams—

The East and West Ockment Rivers have generally remained self-cleansing and very clean. Solid rubbish is periodically removed. Minor intermittent pollutions from the Gas Works and Laundries have been remedied at short notice.

### Swimming Pools—

The swimming pool and paddling pool are supplied by continuous running water and are cleansed and lightly chlorinated during the season.

## SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

The following visits were carried out by your Inspector during the year :—

Houses	...	...	...	...	...	...	42
Houses RE Housing	...	...	...	...	...	...	60
Drainage	...	...	...	...	...	...	33
Water Closets	...	...	...	...	...	...	13
Sewerage	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Water Supply	...	...	...	...	...	...	57
Rivers	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
Refuse Disposal	...	...	...	...	...	...	28
Salvage	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	...	18
Refuse Disposal Tip	...	...	...	...	...	...	18
Tents and Vans	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Schools	...	...	...	...	...	...	16
Infectious Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	—
Infestation	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Rodents	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Animals	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
Food Shops	...	...	...	...	...	...	101
Offensive Trades	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
Informal Notices	...	...	...	...	...	...	43
Remedied	...	...	...	...	...	...	39

### Public Cleansing—

Refuse collection and disposal have been carried out by the Corporation, and weekly collections have again been maintained without interruption throughout the year. In addition monthly collections are made in the Brightley area for the Okehampton Rural District Council in the same manner as last year.

A crew of a driver and two men collect the refuse on Thursdays and Fridays each week with an additional trade collection on Mondays. Street cleansing is also carried out over some areas at the same time as the refuse collection. Normal street cleansing is by orderly truck, and streets are also cleansed daily, including Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings.

Refuse disposal is regulated by tipping on the Council's refuse tip, where rodent control is carried out by the Council's own operator. In addition, the tip is regularly treated and sprayed with tip dressig for the control of flies. Levelling of the tip to improve its shape is carried out, and gradually accumulated scrap metal is being buried in.

### Salvage—

Collection and disposal of salvage was continued fortnightly, with additional collections weekly when required by business premises. The value of this work can be counted not only in the substantial financial returns, but also in the reduction of the bulk refuse in the bins, and minimising the nuisance on the refuse tip. The gross receipts since the



inception of the Borough Council Salvage Scheme were well over £3,000 in ten years, of which 51 tons to the value of nearly £800 were collected in 1951.

**Rodent Control—**

In accordance with Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries requirements, rodent control has been in operation throughout the year with a part-time operator. Block control has been carried out where necessary. The whole of the sewers were tested in March and September, and the minimum of infestation was discovered. The incidence of infestation in the area as a whole again continues to decline.

**Infectious Diseases and Disinfestation—**

No premises needed to be disinfected or fumigated during the year. Disinfestation treatment has been necessary in one case for flies.

**Smoke Abatement—**

Two minor cases of smoke emission were dealt with by informal action.

**Fish Frying—**

There are two small fish frying shops and one larger fish frying shop and café, which have all been well conducted during the year.

**Offensive Trades—**

At the two establishments seven inspections were made.

**FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 & 1948**

The following tables set out in detail inspections during the year and cases in which defects were found :—

**1 Inspections—**

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspec- tions (3)	Written Notices (4)	Occupiers Prose- cuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be en- forced by Local Authorities ...	30	44	2	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority ...	12	14	—	—
(iii) Other Prem- ises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	10	15	—	—
TOTAL ...	52	73	2	—

## 2 Cases in which Defects were found—

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecu- tions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	To H.M. Inspector (4)	Referred By H.M. Inspector (5)	
Want of Cleanliness ...	2	2	—	—	—
Overcrowding ...	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature ...	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation ...	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective d r a i n a g e of floors ...	1	1	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences : (a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...	2	2	—	1	—
(c) Not separate for sexes ...	—	1	—	—	—
Other offences ...	1	1	—	—	—
TOTAL ...	6	6	—	1	—

## SECTION D

### HOUSING

During the year further nominal maintenance repairs and painting works have been carried out on the pre-war houses in Macey's Terrace and Brayhams Terrace Estates. Houses are completely overhauled, re-decorated and cleansed on each change of tenancy. Overhaul and repainting of exterior at Macey's Terrace was completed during the year.

Minor works were carried out in the fourteen additional family units provided by the requisitioning and conversion of properties.

On the Lower Brayhams and Brickfields Temporary Housing Estates the twenty-five houses had minor maintenance repair work.

On the Saville Mead Estate 8 type C1 and C2 houses were in progress at the beginning of the year and eight were completed and occupied at the end of the year. Two "U" type houses were also in hand.

Tenders were obtained for additional houses type C1.2, to continue the building programme as those in progress were completed. These prices were found to be considerably too high for acceptance. Plans were therefore prepared for smaller houses of a modified design in blocks of four together with dual-purpose flats also in blocks of four. These plans were approved by the Ministry and tenders invited at the end of the year for the erection of 20 houses and 12 flats and ancillary works.



## SECTION E

### INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

The unspectacular work of protecting the public against food poisoning continued unceasingly during the year, but there are a few matters which should be underlined as the general public are likely to be possible sufferers.

In the first place the Ministries of Food and Agriculture are responsible for most of our important perishable foods which by their very nature are liable to become contaminated or diseased, yet the M.O.H., who is the legal agent for public protection, finds it extremely difficult to obtain information from these sources. This, in my opinion, is not in the public interest and even information which may be considered confidential should be forthcoming to one who is undoubtedly a senior member of the firm, using the word in the sense that we should all be working to a common end—the benefit of the public.

Secondly, we have retail perishable goods which are particularly liable to contamination. These fall into two groups, one which is obviously bad and which the public can protect themselves by their own senses, in these cases the purveyor probably loses both his customer and his goods; in the other there is no detectable sign of putrefaction to the senses. The worst offenders in this classe are prepared meats, pies, etc., and ice cream. With regard to the latter it will be seen that about 1/5th of the samples taken failed the test. In plain English this means that after the preparation had been made and sterilised it had become recontaminated and the public have no means with their senses of detecting this. It is therefore essential that the bye-laws concerning these premises should be most stringently implemented.

#### Milk—

Fifty-four inspections of cowsheds, dairies and milkshops were made during the year and informal notices given. Generally the standard of cleanliness continued good and in some cases very good.

The following table shows the results of samples taken :—

		Total Samples		Passed	Failed	
Type of Milk		Taken				
Non-Designated	...	43		39	4	
Accredited	... ..	13		11	2	
Tuberculin Tested	...	6		5	1	.....
Totals :		62		55	7	

Of all samples taken from 23 producers, 16 had no failures, and from 10 retailers 5 had no failures during the year.

#### Ice Cream—

Samples of ice cream were taken for bacteriological examination with the following results :—

Grade I.	Grade II.	Grade III.	Grade IV.	Total taken
28	3	5	2	38

Samples were taken from 11 different producers, of which 6 had no failures. From 15 retailers 10 had no failures.



**Bakehouses, Meat and Food Shops—**

These premises have all been well maintained and most tradesmen take a pride in the cleanliness of their premises. Eighteen inspections were made and informal notices given in two instances.

**Food Poisoning—**

No case of food poisoning was notified by medical practitioners during the year.

**Meat—**

The Tavistock Urban District Council have authorised the inclusion of the following table of meat inspection at their Abattoir, from whence you derive your meat :—

**Carcases Inspected and Condemned**

	Cattle, excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed ... (if known)	1762	1149	1889	6144	777
Number inspected	1762	1149	1889	6144	777
All diseases except tuberculosis :					
Whole carcasses condemned ...	9	37	63	71	12
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	1084	689	13	1632	89
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ...	62.03 %	63.18 %	3.02 %	27.71 %	12.99 %
Tuberculosis only :					
Whole carcasses condemned ...	7	39	7	1	8
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	77	221	—	—	81
Percentage of the number inspected a f f e c t e d with tuberculosis ...	4.76 %	22.71 %	.57 %	.01 %	11.45 %

## Other Foodstuffs—

Foods have been examined and 55 condemnation certificates were issued covering in nearly all cases foods which had deteriorated owing to defective containers. Twenty-one were for foreign hams weighing 315lbs.

## SECTION F

### PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE

During the months of June and July a severe epidemic of measles attacked the children. Fortunately this outbreak occurred in the summer and this fact, coupled with modern treatment, reduced complications to a minimum.

Whooping Cough occurred in sub-epidemic form and the sufferers as usual had a protracted and tedious convalescence, with an unavoidable loss of much valuable school time.

Mumps were fairly widespread, but not being notifiable an accurate figure of cases is not known. However, it is known that quite a high proportion of adults were attacked and were very ill and in some cases several months elapsed before they were fit again.

Other ascertainable infectious diseases are set out in the tables below. Apart from these there is a condition almost certainly infectious going around which is characterised by fever, severe headache, in some cases meningeal in type with secondary lung involvement. This disease is certainly not influenza and the suggestion is put forward that it may be an aberrant form of infective mononucleosis. In all the cases seen by the M.O.H. the acute condition was followed by prolonged asthenia with severe anaemia.

The following cases of infectious disease were notified by medical practitioners during the year :—

Measles	...	...	...	...	...	...	142
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	44
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Dysentery	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

The following cases were notified from the schools during the year :—

Measles	...	...	...	...	...	...	81
Chicken Pox	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	22
Mumps	...	...	...	...	...	...	13

Diphtheria : No case of diphtheria was notified during the year.

Tuberculosis : 3 new cases of Pulmonary and 2 new cases of Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified during the year. One death was recorded from the former. At the end of the year 19 cases of tuberculosis remained on the register as follows :—

Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
Males	7	Males	2
Females	8	Females	2

In conclusion I would thank the Mayor and Corporation for the ready hearing my proposals always receive.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE

Medical Officer of Health

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